

Guidance from VEM for Town Officials Recovery from Hurricane Beryl's Flooding

July 16, 2024



TO: Vermont Municipal Officials

FROM: Kim Canarecci, Vermont State Public Assistance Officer (802-585-4209, kim.canarecci@vermont.gov)

FULL TEXT OF EMAIL SENT 7/16/2024, 8:02 AM

Good morning, Vermont public officials-

This email is intended for local public officials dealing with damage to public infrastructure, state agencies, and critical Private Non-Profits impacted by the catastrophic flooding which began on July 10, 2024, and it covers federal financial recovery assistance under the FEMA Public Assistance program (e.g., road repairs/culverts/debris and emergency response). It is not intended for individual homeowners or business owners who may have suffered flood

damage, for whom there are other federal assistance programs and information may be provided by others.

Many of you are asking where we are in the recovery process and what is next following the event?

After a disaster occurs, the State must complete an Internal Damage Assessment to determine if the State has met its Statewide damage total. Each county also has a threshold to meet based on their capita. The State must verify at least \$1.183 million in response and public infrastructure recovery costs. Individual counties must also show damages of \$4.60 per capita to qualify.

Once these damages are validated (by VTrans) and documented in Survey123, the State requests that FEMA come to conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) to determine if we do have enough damages to request a federal disaster. Please note that FEMA may or may not visit your town to validate these damages we have provided them. This does not mean you will not be able to apply for federal funding if we get a declaration. This process is meant to be quick to determine damage thresholds being meant and statewide impacts.

After we request a disaster, that response can take some time.

Please continue to make repairs to your infrastructure. **DO NOT WAIT FOR FEMA.** They do not need to see it; they do not construct or provide any guidance on what roads need to have. If you have any questions on your damages, reach out to your VTrans District Representative.

ANR permits and Army Corps permits in place when working in/around water. Reach out to your ANR River Engineer ASAP to obtain these and ensure that you are complying with State General Stream Alteration standards for any in-stream repairs.

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/StreamAlts/RequestRME.aspx>

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/State-General-Permits/Vermont-General-Permit/>

Repairs should be made back to In-kind or when required to State Codes and Standards. When beginning your recovery rebuilding process, keep records of all costs

associated with your infrastructure repairs. If a federal disaster gets declared, those costs will be eligible for federal reimbursement at a minimum of 75% federal share in a project grant.

After the disaster is declared, I will schedule Applicant Briefings to walk through how the FEMA process works. FEMA will request information and documentation required to substantiate the eligibility of your costs. As a Public Assistance Applicant, your community will be responsible for providing information to document that its facilities, work, and costs are eligible based on the applicable laws, regulations, and policies. At a minimum, FEMA usually requires the “who, what, when, where, why, and how much” for each item claimed.

When using Contractors: Contractors must be procured properly. You are required to follow your own local procurement policy as well as the federal requirements. Federal procurement requires that any contract over \$250k in costs for permanent repairs must be put out for full and open competition and posting to the Vermont Bid Registry to document your procurement effort . For contracts below \$250k you will need to contact at least 3 contractors and documenting that effort. During the immediate emergency response, you may use existing contracts and arrangements, provide they are cost-reasonable and short-term. For major permanent repairs, contractors should be competitively procured! Post RFPs to [Vermont Business Registry and Bid System - Home](#). The APEX center in Montpelier is available to assist with RFP'S. [Vermont APEX Accelerator \(formerly VT PTAC\) | Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#)

EQUIPMENT/BUILDING DAMAGE: Any Damages to town owned buildings and equipment should be submitted to insurance first.

DEBRIS CLEAN-UP: Debris must be collected from within the public right of way. It must be separated by Type. Photograph with GPS of where picked up and where placed.

For more information on the FEMA PA process, please visit [Process of Public Assistance Grants | FEMA.gov](#) and/or [Public Assistance | Vermont Emergency Management](#).

Let me know if you have any questions. Stay safe.